

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 9-19 are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

(a) Claims 5 and 6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nanbu et al. (USP 6,676,152). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Nanbu discloses, in Fig. 4, an inflator having a container 10 (corresponds to the “cylindrical inflator housing” of the present invention) having an initiator mounting part 320, a male connecting part 40 (corresponds to the “diffuser portion”) attached to the container 10, a burst shim 16 (corresponds to the “rupturable plate”) that seals that container 10, an initiator 300 (corresponds to the “igniter”) mounted on the initiator mounting part 320, and an L-shaped duct 40 disposed inside the container 10 for directing hot gas generated by the initiator 300 to the burst shim 26 to rupture the shim 16.

As stated in the foregoing, the initiator 300 of Nanbu is attached to the container 10 by being mounted on the initiator mounting part 320, and is not “attached to the diffuser portion” as recited in claim 5. Therefore, Nanbu fails to disclose or suggest the “igniter” as recited in claim 5.

Claim 6, dependent on claim 5, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 5.

Further, claim 6 is allowable because in the Nanbu reference, the gas generated by the initiator 300 is directed in a direction orthogonal to the axial direction of the container 10 by the L-shaped duct inside the container 10, whereas in the claimed invention of the present

application, the “gas generated by the igniter is directed in the direction is directed in the direction orthogonal to the axial direction of the inflator housing inside the diffuser portion.”

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

(b) Claims 10-13 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Horton et al. (USP 6,629,703). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Horton discloses, in Figs 3 and 4, an inflator having a pressure vessel 10 (corresponds to the “inflator housing” of the present invention), an axial flow coupler 31 (corresponds to the “diffuser portion”), an intermediate member 30, provided between the vessel 10 and the coupler 31, for connecting the coupler 31 to the vessel 10, and an opening device 1 (corresponds to the “igniter”) supported by the coupler 31. The axial flow coupler 31 has a portion where an inner diameter of the coupler 31 is reduced.

However, as stated in the foregoing, the axial flow coupler 31 is attached to the pressure vessel 10 by using an intermediate member 30, and thus the coupler 31 is not “connected directly” to the inflator housing as required in claim 10. Therefore, Horton fails to disclose or suggest the “diffuser portion” as recited in claim 10.

Claims 11-13 and 15, variously dependent on claim 10, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 10.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 14/10 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Horton in view of Nanbu. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 14, dependent on claim 10, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 10.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 1-4, 11/1-15-1, and 16-19 are allowable over the prior art of record.

Conclusion

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of the pending claims in the present application are respectfully requested.


The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Reply After Final in that it raises no new issues. Alternatively, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Reply After Final in that it places the application in better form for Appeal.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi (#40,417) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: May 14, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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